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Guide

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HOLINESS
IN
MARRIAGE

THE
CATECHUMENATE
RESTORED

DOMINICAN FATHERS
LOGAS COLLEGE
DUBUQUE IOWA
CITY

All that is indeed true: but its lyricism need not blind us to the fact that for many the association of holiness with marriage will not easily be accepted and that, for all, holiness is normally acquired only by long and arduous co-operation with the grace of God. The pitfall of angelism lies always in wait for the writer on marriage: he may forget the Toms and Dicks and Marys of his everyday acquaintance with their clamant common needs and temptations and their homely loves, and that it is in that seemingly ordinary setting of their lives that they are "called to be saints." Nor can he forget that, for so many, "holiness" is a word with false overtones which have been induced in no small part by imaginations corrupted by inflated prayers, by "holy" pictures and by stilted, "edifying" biographies of saints. Yet, remembering that in our Father's house there are many mansions, surely the ideal of a genuine and attainable holiness can and should be presented to the married. Canonized married saints there have been: it is by no means improbable that the present renewal of Christian marriage will see many more in times to come. It may well also be that in countries from which all priests have been expelled the continuing life of the Church—as over centuries in Japan—will depend on the administration by layfolk of the sacraments of Baptism and Marriage.

What Is Holiness?

When we ask ourselves in what holiness principally consists we have Our Lord's answer to the Pharisee lawyer as our clear guide. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and thy whole soul and thy whole mind. This is the greatest of the commandments and the first. And the second, its like, is this: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments all the law and the prophets depend." That love is initially a gift, a "grace" of God: it "has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom we have received." But we must continue in it through life and by co-operating with the actual graces of God, increase in it. "God is love: he who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him." "We are to follow the truth in a spirit of charity and so grow up in everything, into a due proportion with Christ, who is our head. On him all the body depends; it is organized and unified by each contact with

the source which supplies it: and thus, each limb receiving the active power it needs, it achieves its natural growth, building itself up through charity."

But the word "love" is liable to even more misinterpretations than that of "holiness." And so the inspired word of God takes care to leave us under no illusions to what it means in practice. It means primarily a union of wills: it means a loving and filial conforming of each Christian's will with God's. "If you have any love for me you must keep the commandments which I give you . . . the man who loves me is the man who keeps the commandments he has from me . . . if a man has any love for me, he will be true to my word; and then he will win my Father's love and we will both come to him and make our continual abode with him." "If a man keeps true to God's word, then it is certain that the love of God has reached its full stature in him." And still more briefly: "Loving God means keeping his commandments." The practical test of holiness then for every Christian is that he does God's will to the best of his ability in a loving spirit of sonship. "To prove that you are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out in us, Abba, Father." "You are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

It is obvious then that while holiness is essentially the same for all, there will be as many ways to it as there are different states of life, in fact as there are different men. A nun must set about fulfilling the will of God in a very different way from that of a married couple; and the latter, even in the close bond of marriage, remain individuals with individual responsibilities to God as well as those which they have in common. In a short article such as the present the marriage element in married holiness will of necessity be stressed and from the beginning we have insisted that it needs stressing. And much that is common to all Christian holiness can only be briefly touched upon or must be completely omitted. A fully adequate treatment of holiness in marriage would mean a treatise on Christian perfection! Even the encyclical *Casti Connubii* sets itself no such aim.

Already in its natural state, because it was willed by God, marriage had an innate holiness of its own. This is clearly stated in the encyclical *Arcanum* of Pope Leo XIII: "Marriage has God as its author.

From the beginning it was as it were a figure of the incarnation of the Word of God. By that very fact there is in it something sacred and religious, which is not superadded to it but is innate, which it does not owe to man but which it holds from nature. . . . It is certain that in all peoples, because of an innate, habitual perception, the idea of marriage spontaneously awakened in the mind the idea of something associated with religion and sanctity."

But grace builds on nature; and it is this already existing natural union of man and woman that Jesus Christ takes and elevates to the supernatural world, using it as a symbol, a sign, an efficacious sign—in our technical language, a *sacrament*—of His own union with His spouse the Church. He had the right, for He was God, to convey holiness to men in any way He chose; and "being found in the likeness of man" and "knowing what was in man" He, in His loving kindness, chose the way of eternal signs that would, by His almighty power, bring about what they signified and would cause grace and holiness in those who co-operated with His loving design by the use of their free wills. The initial and essential holiness of marriage is therefore "poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit;" but man must will to receive it, as subsequently he must will to increase and develop it by accepting and using the particular graces which God will generously send him in response to his use of prayer and the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist.

Man Cooperates

It is no harm to remind ourselves here that there is nothing of magic about the sacraments: they were instituted by Christ who is God and their effects do not follow willy-nilly. "God who created us without our aid," wrote Saint Augustine, "will not sanctify us without it." Whatever external rites might be performed there would be no marriage whatsoever unless the man and woman mutually exchanged wills and really intended to hand over to one another permanent and exclusive procreative rights. And between two Christians, between two members of Christ, that mutual exchange will always be a sacrament where no impediment exists and it will symbolize the marriage of Christ and His bride, the Church, and actually bring about for the couple a

sharing in that most mysterious but most real of all marriages.

Now this extraordinary symbolism which is literally their birthright by Baptism, enters scarcely at all into the thought world of many Catholics, possibly even of the majority of them. A priest who tries in preaching or in private talks to deduce from it their obligations to morality and holiness will find himself met by an amazed incomprehension. The amazement indeed is good and would be approved by Saint Paul who assured them on their wedding morning that "the mystery is great;" but he would, we might well think, be alarmed that what he had written almost as a commonplace to the Christians of Ephesus (no esoteric group) should after twenty centuries be so many high-faluting and unpractical "texts" to the Christians of Dublin or Kansas. True, God's revealed mysteries can be grasped by our limited intellects only partially and by analogy; but that by no means excuses us from the effort to plumb their depths. Surely (as indeed in much else that pertains to our Catholic faith) it is the continuous and ultimately wearisome stressing of morals and the almost total neglect of the mystery which is their justification that has led in good part to the sexual shambles of our own century.

The portion of the *Letter to the Ephesians* which states the mystery of marriage is read as the epistle of the nuptial Mass. "Wives must obey their husbands as they would the Lord. The man is the head to which the woman's body is united, just as Christ is the head of the Church, he, the Savior on whom the safety of his body depends; and women must owe obedience at all points to their husbands, as the Church does to Christ. You who are husbands must show love to your wives, as Christ showed love to the Church when he gave himself up on its behalf. He would hallow it, purify it by bathing it in the water to which his word gave life, he would summon it into his own presence, the Church in all its beauty, no stain, no wrinkle, no such disfigurement; it was to be holy, it was to be spotless. And that is how husband ought to love wife, as if she were his own body; in loving his wife, a man is but loving himself. It is unheard of that a man should bear ill-will to his own flesh and blood; no, he keeps it fed and warmed; and so it is with Christ and his Church; we are limbs of his body; flesh and bone, we belong to him. That

is why a man will leave his father and mother and will cling to his wife and the two will become one flesh. Yes, those words are a high mystery and I am applying them here to Christ and his Church: Meanwhile each of you is to love his wife as he would love himself and the wife is to pay reverence to her husband."

The mystery is "high," is "great," is "of vast meaning": translators in English, as in every language, strain to give the adjective its fullest import. For there is no make-believe here: to regard the human marriage union merely as a poetic symbol of the union of Christ and the Church is to destroy utterly the greatness of the mystery; it would be to empty out the sacrament: it would be to ignore the fact that God's dealings with men are a love-story and are frequently presented as such—sometimes to the unprepared reader's discomfiture — in the Scriptures. But our minds are anything but conditioned to such a mode of speech and for the most part we forget that the Incarnation is the alliance, the marriage, of Christ to His Church and that it was sealed by the most heroic of selfgivings upon the cross. We think of human marriage first; it is more graspable by our minds. But God doesn't, for the first marriage was, as Pope Leo assured us, the forefiguring of the marriage that is the incarnation. Nor does Saint Augustine; his language is as daring as that of Saint Paul or of the *Canticle*. "He (Christ) is the bridegroom, she (the Church) is the bride. They shall be two, it has been said, in one flesh."

Let our married people then know the high holiness that is held out to them in this mystery: they are baptized, they have a potency for holiness; and the effort to live the mystery will aid them to savor it all the more. "The learning which I impart," Saint Paul could say with Jesus, "is not my own, it comes from him who sent me. Anyone who is prepared to do his will, can tell for himself whether such learning comes from God." Every Christian marriage is an imitation of, a symbol of, a sharing in, a representation of, an actualizing of the marriage of the second Adam to the Church. And their aims are alike and marvellously coincide: the begetting of children for God and their education for eternal life and the mutual comforting of bridegroom and bride. The conclusion from all this is made clear in *Casti Connubii*: "The religious character

of marriage, its sublime significance of grace and the union between Christ and the Church, clearly requires that those about to marry should show a holy reverence for it and zealously try to make their marriage approach as nearly as possible to the archetypal type of Christ and the Church."

Nor, as often again we are unaware, does the sacrament cease on the wedding-day, as Saint Robert Bellarmine indicates. Matrimony "is a sacrament like that of the Eucharist, which not only when it is being conferred but also while it remains, is a sacrament; for as long as the married parties are alive, so long is their union a sacrament of Christ and the Church." The vistas of holiness which are thus opened up to the married are breathtaking in their extent and magnificence. Their lives consecrated to God by the sacrament they could and should see in all the major and minor happenings and activities of their life the will of God which will be their sanctification. To rise at night for prayer, we may with reason hope, sanctifies the Carthusian; is the rising of a mother night after night, maybe for years, to soothe an ailing child or a crying child to be reduced to a merely natural level? Is the toiling of a Jesuit bursar to make ends meet for his house to be regarded as something spiritual; and the same (often more anxious) toil of the father of a family to be reckoned as just secular? The Church of Christ has defined that the state of virginity chosen for Christ is higher than that of matrimony: she has nowhere declared that man for man and woman for woman the individual religious is holier than the married brothers and sisters they have "left in the world."

Defective Training

Many, haunted unconsciously by the ghosts of past heresies never quite laid and handicapped from youth by a non-existent or a puritanical training for purity either in marriage or religion, find it next to impossible to see a connection between the use of sex and holiness. (The quite real difficulty of the latter we will treat later.) Again and again we must insist that the union of bodies as well as the union of hearts and minds enters fully into the symbolism of marriage. Medieval times may have been rough and gross: at least they were saved from the later fog, compounded

of romanticism and Jansenism and Puritanism, that has hidden from us for centuries the true symbolism of sex in marriage. The birth-control blight of our times is not primarily a problem of economics and population explosion: it is a question of the spirit. And how many of us realize clearly with Jean Guitton that it is "the total participation in the nuptial mystery of Christ, which is the ratified and consummated union of two Christians, that renders their union unbreakable."

We reminded ourselves above to be aware of angelism: we are not dealing with the loves of angels but with the passions of fallen—though redeemed—man who is on his way to his fatherland of peace. The more personal, the more tender, the more unselfish (that is, loving), the more really self-giving are all the actions of married life, especially its central act, the more they normally will share in Christ's nuptial mystery. "Each be other's comfort kind; deep, deeper than divined." Selfish mating would indeed be a sorry symbol of Christ's so unselfish union with the Church; and, let us add, lest the word "Church" be too jargonized, with each human soul. It was the Lord Jesus who said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" and only He who is the hidden guest of the soul can know fully what blessedness—and the reverse—is the lot of each individual in the human couple. It was He who said too: "If *any* man will come after me, let him deny himself."

A reaction against Puritanism and prudery must not lead us into hedonism; and so it was that in 1951 Pope Pius XII found himself forced to speak very strongly against the theories of a number of Catholic writers who were—without realizing it and with good intentions—undermining one of the essential laws of holiness for marriage or any other state by an undue exaggeration of the place of pleasure. "The gravity and holiness of the Christian moral law does not allow an unbridled satisfaction of the sexual instinct nor that exclusive tendency to pleasure and voluptuousness. . . . Happiness in marriage is in direct proportion to the respect the couple have for each other, even in their intimate relations." Here is one more impressive example of the rule that real happiness and holiness go hand in hand. But it is only fair and perhaps even necessary to add that in spite

of the best intentions there may be failings and serious failings in the sexual side of marriage and that these—like all our failings—should lead to a salutary humility and not to a dangerous depression; and they demand of the priest who may have to deal with them not an impersonal and distant rigorism but a Christ-like patience and loving-kindness. "Has no one condemned thee? No one, Lord, she said. And Jesus said to her, I will not condemn thee either. Go and do not sin again henceforward."

Gradual Growth

That self-giving love of which we spoke in the beginning of the last paragraph is not however the growth of a day. The growth of holiness like all good growth is normally slow: in marriage it is marked by a gradual purifying through the years of what was in all probability in the beginning a love that contained no small amount of self-regarding. The distinction between *eros* and *agape*, between (roughly) love and charity is as old as Christianity; and in the patient transfiguring of the one by the other lies the secret of Christian married sanctity. We are only saying again, though in different terms, what St. Paul said to his Ephesians. "No stain, no wrinkle" is not the immediate attainment of human love: it must be washed again and again "in the water to which His word gave life" and—let us never forget it—since grace builds on nature, that purification as a general rule is accompanied by a washing in the waters of human tribulation which is the lot of every human couple.

It is no easy thing to plot the graph of love: it has its ups and downs, its divagations. But we can with some measure of accuracy say that God's plan and hope for the pair He has "joined together" is that their initial somewhat earthly, somewhat self-regarding love should with His grace operating through the chances and changes of this mortal life be transformed into a much more self-giving love and finally into a great and pure love for God Himself. But that change is no destruction; they have vowed each other love until death does them part. Nor is it the sublimation of the psychologists. It is, as far as one can at all accurately describe it, a transformation, a transfiguration. It is the ever more perfect fulfilling of the first commandment of holiness.

ness. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with the whole of thy heart."

The problem is the old, old problem of human and divine love which Saint Augustine and Saint Ignatius and Saint John of the Cross have each in their own particular way described with such frightening accuracy. Nearer our own day few have stated the problem, from the aspect of married love, with greater clarity than Kierkegaard—a clarity that he paid for with such marked sacrifice: "From the divine standpoint, the happiest love between human beings has always a danger of which a merely human conception of love knows nothing, the danger that the earthly love may grow too violent and impede our relationship with God, the danger that our relationship to God may claim the happiest earthly love as a sacrifice, although humanly speaking all is well and no danger threatens from any quarter. From the possibility of this danger it follows that even in the happiest state of love you must be on guard; not lest you grow tired of the beloved or the beloved of you but lest you or the beloved or both should forget God." To love one another "as I have loved you," that is "as Christ showed love to the Church," is a super-human task with a super-human end. As the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom prays: "Let us love one another in order that being united in one mind and heart we may acknowledge the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the consubstantial and indivisible Trinity."

In the strengthening and purifying of this conjugal love the children that are its fruit are meant in God's providence to play a leading part, a fact that should vastly console Christian parents when Herod is no longer a grim monster of the past but slays with the sword of science in almost every country of the earth. The quasi-universality of what Pope Pius XI calls the "unspeakable crime" should surely bring home to Christian men and women the holiness that lies in the reverent loving use of their baptized bodies for the begetting of new life. "Loving God means keeping his commandments." Only mothers themselves can fully appreciate the love of God and the trust in Him that the new life within them calls forth; and it is Our Blessed Lord Himself who reminds us of the anguish of childbearing and of the subsequent joy "that a man is born into the world."

The sight of their new-born child is for many a couple their first clear perception of God's call to them to a life of unselfishness. Here again the grace of the sacrament purges their human love of much that is petty and narrow, helps their faith and hope by aiding them to see the child of their flesh as a child of God and a future citizen of heaven and awakens in them a sense of responsibility that adds a new dimension to their love. And with each new child that is born to them they are invited to make further acts of faith in God's providence and to realize more fully the significance of the offertory prayer of their wedding Mass: "I put my trust in Thee, Lord! I say: Thou art my God! In Thy hands are my fortunes." Set in a world that has largely lost the sense of self-denial and is so fearlessly swayed by the propaganda for so-called birth control, the Christian couple who sincerely wish to adhere to God's will with regard to the spacing of births and the number of their children must take as their standard right reason enlightened by prayer. It is here above all today that they need to be reminded "to fan the flame of that special grace which God kindled" in them by the sacrament of Marriage. "For this sacrament . . . also adds special gifts, good impulses and seeds of grace, amplifying and perfecting the powers of nature; and enabling the recipients not only to understand with their minds but also to relish intimately, grasp firmly, will effectively and fulfill in deed all that belongs to the state of wedlock and its purposes and duties. It also gives them the right to obtain the help of actual grace whenever they need it for the discharge of their matrimonial tasks."

Proportionate Help

Would that the doctrine of sacramental grace contained in that paragraph of *Casti Connubii* were as familiar to the married as it deserves. The burdens of marriage are many and heavy: the law of chastity can at times make very severe demands—often far more severe because of the circumstance than it makes on the priest or religious. It is when man and wife narrow down the concept of their state to something almost merely natural and see in it (sometimes alas- under the influence of over-moralizing sermons) more of grinding legalism than of Christian mysticism, that the holiness and

happiness of their marriage is in danger. "The wisdom of the flesh is death: but the wisdom of the spirit is life and peace." Just as for the religious who has not the spirit of his rule, the letter of the law kills. It does not make for holiness in the family any more than in the cloister; it is far removed from that "intimate relish" which the Pope describes as one of the graces of the sacrament.

"Believe me when you did it to the least of my brethren here, you did it to me." And he took a little child and gave it a place in the midst of them; and he took it in his arms and said to them: "Whoever welcomes such a child as this in my name, welcomes me." Even the good pagan realized that the upbringing and educating of a child was a matter of reverence; how much more must the Christian parents who are in the place of God bring themselves to realize that it is a matter of holiness. The child of their flesh has been reborn from the womb of the Church in Baptism; his feet are now set upon the road of holiness, the road to heaven, and it is they who must guide him. The Christian unbringing and education of their children is the manifest will of God for them: the fulfilling of it will now be the main measure of their holiness. No "apostolate" can ever replace their apostolate in the home: the least of Christ's brethren—on whose treatment they will be judged—are primarily their own children. Here again the natural law is wondrously elevated into the sphere of holiness. Good pagan parents welcome children; Christian parents who live by faith welcome Christ in their children.

If self-denial be the touchstone of love, the test of holiness, Christian parents are offered innumerable opportunities of both in the rearing of their children; and it is the great tragedy of their lives when they either ignore or resent them to the degree of rebelling against them. For many years of their lives and for almost all the days and hours of them, they are called "to lay down their lives for their friends." That is especially the mother's burden and privilege and whether canonized or known only to God, many of them must surely become saints. And how many of them in the process become the mothers of saints! It is the mother who can say in a very profound way with Saint Paul: "My little children, I am in travail over you afresh, until I can see

Christ's image formed in you!" The father too should be conscious that his fatherhood is derived from and is a sharing in the fatherhood of God. That consciousness should prevent him from leaving too much of the burden of the home to the mother. And it is in that sharing that a new depth and tenderness comes into their conjugal love. God is never outdone in generosity: when Christ says "you did it to me," He means it and He rewards accordingly all that is done for His little ones in a spirit of faith and love.

Where father and mother love each other in Christ and share a common realization of their responsibility before God, holiness will blossom in the home. Children react instinctively to love long before they have any understanding of the example that is given them: and in turn again that example is far more vital for their religious formation than any words that can be spoken to them. Religion is caught rather than taught: the child will be but little impressed by exhortations to fulfill his duties to God if he sees that the parents themselves bother little about practice. Especially in the early years the religious atmosphere of the home will be one of the dominant elements in the child's formation.

Unforced Piety

This is by no means to say that the home must be pietistic or be turned into a miniature church repository. The reaction to such religiosity can be violent in adolescence; at the very least it inhibits the growth of real piety; at its worst it can lead to the complete abandonment in later life of religion. The tendency in many modern families however is precisely the opposite. There is a false shame about any outward expression of religion especially in the portions of the house that are seen by others. Aesthetics and religion in this country have not for a long time gone hand in hand. But there is a wind of change; and more and more objects of religious art that would grace—in double sense of the word—any Catholic home are being made available.

Writing on holiness in marriage one must also make a strong plea for the retention or restoration of some common prayer in the family. Even before their children are born, parents who value rightly both their love and their religion will make a genuine

effort at some joint prayer. It will forge a new bond between them for it is very different in its psychological effect from individual prayer: and that loving unison will later embrace the children as they grow old enough to appreciate something of what prayer means. The different liturgical periods of the year and the greater feasts of the Church can be occasions of adding variety and significance to the family prayer. And every Baptism and first Holy Communion, as well as affording admirable opportunities for living and practical teaching on the truths of faith, should see the bond of their unity in Christ and the Church drawn ever closer.

But is is above all through the Mass, where Christ re-enacts His love-sacrifice for His spouse the Church, that both parents and children will grow in the spirit

of love and sacrifice without which there can be no home and no holiness. And the sacrament of Penance sincerely used will teach them to forgive even as they are forgiven and will prevent minor lapses in charity from developing, as they so easily can, into major quarrels and even into hate. "In the evening of life we shall be judged on love."

Men and women, especially in youth, have always had their hopes and dreams about marriage. Mary and Joseph, the model of holiness for all parents, also had them; and they were fulfilled "with all the completion God has to give." It is the only true fulfillment and only in Christ is it possible. "He whose power is at work in us is powerful enough and more than powerful enough to carry out his purpose beyond all our hopes and dreams."

A TRUE EIRENICISM

A false "eirenicism," toning down or disregarding real disagreements between Christians and minimizing the significance of what the Church teaches as revealed truth—that would be both a betrayal of our faith and a grave disservice to our separated brethren. But equally does that faith call for a true "eirenicism" towards those who know it not or share it only in part: a spirit of understanding, of patience, of humility, of loving-kindness, of tolerance, in a word of real love in Christ.

That she is the Body of Christ is, I suppose, the one truth about His Church about which all Christians are in some manner agreed. When all of us, of all "denominations," realize, that is, make real to ourselves, that the vast majority of us are by charity united one to another invisibly by means of that Mystical Body; when we realize the significance of valid baptism and of a sincere desire to follow Christ in His way . . . we all think of and act towards one another in the light of these things then—and not till then—shall we have begun to do our part in preparing the way to the complete and visible Christian unity that our Lord wills.

The prayer of the Church in the Mass for the healing of separation according to the Roman rite makes clear that only Almighty God can do that work of healing. We can help by doing each what is in our power to straighten and smooth the way for divine grace to flow where it is needed. Or we can hinder by strewing the path with the stumbling-blocks of pride, ignorance, complacency and unfriendliness.

DONALD ATTWATER

The Catechumenate Restored

The most important liturgical document that has come from Rome in recent months is that concerning the Order of Adult Baptism and in its ultimate effects it may be one of the most far-reaching. Many priests for some years have felt a certain malaise about the whole question of the instruction and reception of those we commonly call 'converts' but who more properly are catechumens. The long-established custom in England is to give them twenty, twenty-six or even fifty-two 'instructions,' at the end of which in a jejune little rite they are officially received into the Church and may then receive Holy Communion. During this time the catechumen will have gone to Mass, will have received some information about religious practices, perhaps with an imaginative instructor will have been taken on a tour of the church, but, with the best will in the world, the process has remained almost wholly intellectual, i.e. something addressed to his mind.

Yet, there is enough experience to show that this process is not adequate. For weeks or months the catechumen feels ill-adjusted to Catholic life and sometimes never becomes completely at ease. In any case this over-intellectual approach unduly emphasizes but one aspect of conversion, the acquiring of the necessary information for the assent of faith. But 'becoming a Catholic' *does* involve a complete *conversion*, in St. Benedict's phrase in rather different circumstances, a *conversio morum*. This the early church realized very clearly and the various 'scrutinies' that accompanied the last stages of the catechumenate were devised to discover and test the moral and spiritual state of the candidate. Moreover, throughout the whole period the candidate was not only instructed but blessed, exor-

cised, gradually initiated into the Christian life. It was an organic and vital process.

All this fell into oblivion for centuries and even in missionary territories substitutes were used for the ancient way of the Church. Now we are informed (A.A.S. 30, v. 62—*Doc. Cath.*, t. LIX, num. I, 380): 'Many Ordinaries in mission territories have urgently requested the re-establishment of the different rites of the catechumate in their ancient form; to these have been added the voices of Ordinaries in Catholic countries 'for today the number of adults who wish to enter the Church is continually on the increase.' Accordingly, after consultation with the Holy Office and the Congregation *De Propaganda Fide*, the Congregation of Rites has issued a revised Order for the Baptism of Adults and has divided the ritual into seven parts which should be spread over the whole period of the catechumenate.

First, there is to be a preliminary spiritual preparation given by the priest, but the laity also are exhorted to share in the process and by *their prayers and by living out their Christian faith more seriously to bring spiritual aid to the catechumens*. Then come the giving of the name, rejection of error and conversion to God and the first sign of the cross. The second stage is marked by the rite of the salt and the third, fourth and fifth stages are accompanied by exorcisms. The sixth stage is of great importance; the catechumens are solemnly introduced into the Church and there follow the last exorcism, the opening of the ears, the renunciation of Satan and the anointing

with the oil of catechumens. The seventh and last stage, the completion of the catechumenate, is of course the baptism.

It is a matter of some importance that all these rites are to be introduced by a catechesis explaining their meaning so that as well as the 'instruction,' there is always this gradual initiation into the life of the Church. The Congregation orders quite emphatically that the various stages may not be omitted or jumped though for good reasons one or two may be combined. And finally bishops are left a considerable amount of freedom to adapt such of the rites (e.g. the priest's touching the catechumen with his hand) where, but only where, such actions are likely to give offence.

It is clear that only where adult baptism is given, this particular form of Christian initiation may be practiced. In this country catechumens, if they are baptized at all, are baptized conditionally, but may it not be that the same pattern will provide a solution to a problem that is already giving the pastoral clergy some anxiety even in this country?

Quite apart from the question of the reception of adult unbaptized catechumens, this formula at least suggests that we should

begin rethinking the whole matter of how we instruct the many people who are received into the Church every year. Might we not take it even a little further and see a stage at which people could be received and then prepare them for the sacrament of Penance and finally for full entry into membership of the Church with Holy Communion? In these circumstances there is even a chance that they could be confirmed before Communion and thus the whole process of initiation would be gone through at moments corresponding to the growth moments of the catechumen and the order of the sacraments of initiation would be preserved. No doubt it would at first seem also much more difficult but it would be infinitely worthwhile.

One last remark. Experience in some mission territories and indeed in France has shown that the catechumenate must exist in the climate of a living community and that if this is so the laity inevitably and as a matter of course will play their part in integrating new Christians into the life of the parish. For example, in the French system, a sponsor is appointed to each catechumen from the very beginning of his catechumenate and accompanies him (or her) throughout its course.

They Are All Different

"For your education to be really a success, you need to deal with your children, as far as possible, individually. Much of the work of information and of formation too, has to be imparted in a general fashion, for all together; and that not only for practical reasons, but also because it helps when the child-mind sees that certain principles and certain rules of conduct are to be accepted by everybody. But there is also a work to be done for each child, and this would not be achieved if it were done, so to speak, collectively. One child needs to be encouraged, for example, another may need to be restrained. For one, praise may be a necessity; for others, rebuke or even punishment may be useful. Remember: souls are created not by mass-production, but one by one, by God who takes pleasure in making each one different from every other."

POPE PIUS XII to Italian Schoolmasters, Nov. 1955



CATECHETICAL MATERIALS

In 1927, Father Joseph Malloy of the Paulist Fathers wrote a little manual called *A Catechism For Inquirers*. It was in regular question and answer form but so far as I know, it was the first attempt to get out a catechism that could be used for the instruction of non-Catholic adults in the teachings and practices of the Church. At the time the catechisms in use had been compiled with children in mind. It is true that the *Catechism Of The Council Of Trent* could conceivably be used for this purpose, but it was so bulky that only the most intrepid tried it. The book most widely used was *The Baltimore Catechism, Number Two*.

On its appearance, Father Malloy's Catechism was particularly praised for what seems a commonplace today, namely, the fairly wide use of Scripture texts. They are, indeed, set forth after an apologetic fashion, but even when priests interested in a more kerygmatic approach began to appear on the scene, they found this catechism helpful for its indication of Scriptural sources.

Since its first edition, which was rapidly sold out, it has been revised many times. New material has been added in the course of these revisions and some of the existing material has been modified. It is still widely used in the work of instruction because it is concise, yet sufficiently complete to provide the key concepts of Catholic teaching. Furthermore, it is simple enough for distribution to a wide range of people.

It is mainly concerned with doctrinal catechesis, but there are also excellent sections on Catholic prayers, including the Divine Praises, so often overlooked in manuals and yet so common to Catholic practice. It also contains the regulations on

fast and abstinence and a most useful exposition of the whole ceremony of the reception of converts.

Throughout this country and Canada, there are priests who have compiled instructions for converts following the pattern of this catechism. The only ones published, however, are those of the late Father William Grace, S.J. who conducted a most successful Inquiry Forum at the Jesuit Church in Milwaukee for many years. He is credited with some 1,300 converts.

His lectures were published by Bruce in a book called *The Catholic Church And You*. In it, Father Grace explains that his purpose is to explain the teaching of the Church following the order of presentation given by Father Malloy. Father Malloy has provided the skeleton and Father Grace has built on it.

Many a young priest is anxious to have some developed ideas before him when he first starts the work of instruction. Later he will begin to improvise as he becomes more familiar with the work. Here in catechism and in lecture form are two works that he will find of value.

Father Grace's book does a fine job of providing an approach that should help even the most hesitant. Every priest has the background in his seminary training to instruct, but he must actualize his potency. He must learn to communicate by communicating, and his initial efforts will be all the better for the help he receives from the experience of others.

The *Catechism For Inquirers* is published by the Paulist Press and retails for 35¢. *The Catholic Church And You* is published by Bruce. The price is \$1.35. They are worth looking over.

JAMES B. LLOYD, C.S.P.

READING I'VE LIKED

Nearly a hundred years ago, John Henry Newman permitted his friend and former curate, William Copeland to publish a large volume of selections from his Anglican sermons. He did so in the desire that it would "cultivate a unity of ethos among those who would otherwise differ." And in Copeland's preface, the editor expresses the hope that these sermons "from their bearing on the formation of the Christian character may best contribute to the promotion of mutual sympathy between estranged communions and alienated hearts." Newman, a pioneer in so many ways, had an ecumenical purpose in allowing these sermons to be republished. For this (and a dozen other reasons) it is a pleasure to report the appearance of *Newman at St. Mary's, A Selection of the Plain and Parochial Sermons*, edited with an introduction by Lawrence F. Barmann, S.J. Newman Press, \$4.50.

Few people are unaware that it was Christ Himself who taught us the Lord's Prayer. And there is scarcely a Christian who does not recite this prayer with more or less frequency. Yet it is for many hardly more than a convenient formula which is too often recited with little appreciation of the great truths it recalls. Tertullian once said that it is nothing less than a summary of the entire gospel! But to appreciate the justice of this claim one needs a guide to its rich content. This is precisely what you will find in *Understanding the Lord's Prayer* by H. Van Den Bussche (Sheed & Ward) \$3.00.

Chesterton once said that there are two objections to the sacrament of penance which trouble converts in different stages of their journey to the Church. At one time they mistakenly think confession to be a practice which actually fosters sin by the ease with which sin is forgiven. Later on, when they know more about the moral demands of the Christian life they are troubled by the utter sincerity demanded by this sacrament. Certainly Catholics and non-Catholic inquirers both need to grasp the meaning of this merciful act of God and understand how to employ it fruitfully.

One of the most satisfying books for this purpose is *The Sacrament of Penance* by Father Paul Anciaux (Sheed & Ward, \$3.50). This volume is particularly helpful since it includes the latest theological developments, along with a concern for the pastoral and catechetical needs of priests and people.

In 1961, at Graymoor, the Fathers of the Atonement held an outstanding symposium on Christian Unity which was addressed by some of the leading ecumenists of Europe and America. The significant papers read are now available to the general reader. In *Problems Before Unity* (Helicon Press, \$3.50) one can read at leisure these illuminating talks, which can aid in bringing greater understanding to American Catholics on this divinely inspired movement.

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GUIDE

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Guide Lights

THE POPE IS PLEASED . . .

Pope John addressed a group of Catholic journalists and told them that he believes the world at large understands the Second Vatican Council and its significance. "The council has had a vast reverberation through the world," he said. "You surely will have wondered about the meaning of such a lively and widespread interest which is being demonstrated fully now."

"First of all we can quietly rule out the idea that the interest of the press was attracted by the external elements of the ceremonies, customs and unusual rites — though all these things made an impact and were stirring. It is a matter of far more than this, thank God. We believe, therefore, that we can say the event of the council itself was understood—its great reality as the shining representation of the Christmas message in its fullness, in order to adapt it in a more efficacious form to the demands of our time."

THE CHURCH CAN CHANGE . . .

The Holy Father was reiterating something he had declared when he opened the council. Then he said, "The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of the faith is one thing; the way in which it is expressed is another." With these words he was encouraging the fathers of the council to depart from an arid traditionalism which had come to make the Church so unattractive in the modern world, so suspect of ecclesiastical arrogance, so apparently closed to the movement of history and the changing needs of men.

That the fathers of the council by and large were of a temper to heed this direction is indicated by two men who met in a panel discussion sponsored by the State University of Iowa. One was a Presbyterian, the other was a Catholic bishop. The Presbyterian was Dr. James H. Nichols of Princeton Theological School. He was one of the official observers at the council. He observed that it is "no longer accurate, if it ever was," to think of the Catholic Church as a "closed, complacent and sectarian body that has nothing to learn from anybody else."

The bishop was the Most Reverend Robert E. Tracy of Baton Rouge. He said that he was surprised to find the bishops of the world far less conservative than they are reputed to be. He defined conservatism as a general attitude that not much change is needed to accomplish the Church's work in the world. He noted that the schema on liturgy, which he described as "a very liberal document" had only eleven bishops voting against it. "My question is," he said, "where are all the conservatives?" They would seem, indeed to have changed their views under the influence of the council, if there was ever any large body of them.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF TAIZE . . .

Two guests of the Secretariat for Unity at the council were monks from the Brotherhood of Taize, a Protestant monastery in France. The purpose of the community is reconciliation in a wide spectrum: between separated Christians, between unbelievers and Christianity, between mankind and the challenges of an industrialized world, even between husbands and wives.

Their method is to pray and live together at Taize as a monastic community dedicated to God, and to work in the world as men having secular occupations but dedicated to Christian unity. They can be found on missions at Marseilles as dock workers, in North Africa as bricklayers among Moslems, or working in the slums of Abidjan in French West Africa.

The Prior of this unusual Protestant community is Roger Schutz. He has a passion for unity that leaves him restless. He once wrote, "The poison of disunity is so insidious that it is not recognized by those affected by it. By shutting us up in Christian ghettos our divisions have stifled our vitality." He constantly stresses that Christ's prayer for unity is "a positive command of faith." It demands obedience.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM . . .

Another Brotherhood, perhaps an even more curious one, recently met in Rome for its eighth annual Agape or Love-feast. It brought together more than five hundred

persons of twenty-one faiths from sixty-nine nations. Among the guests were not only members of various Christian denominations, but also Jews and Moslems. The meeting was sponsored by Rome's Pro Deo University and the chief speaker was Cardinal Bea.

In his talk the Cardinal said that the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity would submit to the next session of the council a document which would proclaim the Catholic Church's belief in freedom of conscience and worship. He said it would uphold every man's right to follow the dictates of his conscience and his right to worship as he chooses without interference by the state.

RELAXATION IN SPAIN . . .

There is a strong impression in many non-Catholic quarters that such freedom is not high on the list of things the Church really wants. And no matter how loudly we might proclaim it in this country, there will always be those who think we speak from expediency. Their favorite answer is to point to Spain where there is a measure of official discrimination against Protestants.

Now perhaps this wound is in the process of being somewhat healed. The sessions of the yearly conference of Spanish Metropolitans were conducted in secret in Madrid, but it is believed that the situation of Protestants was on the agenda. Informed circles said that the Metropolitans, or chief bishops, discussed the possibility of certain relaxations. The informants said that some of the questions considered by the prelates may have involved more freedom to open Protestant schools in the country and the easing of Church restrictions in the cases of mixed marriages, which are permissible under the civil code.

CHALLENGE TO THE LAITY . . .

The influence of the Vatican Council reaches not only to the bishops, but to the laity, and it will reach to them in even greater measure in the years ahead. Martin H. Work, executive director of the National Council of Catholic men urged the laity, in an address delivered in Cleveland, to ready themselves to accept the challenge which will be handed to them at the end of the council.

"The post-council era will be one of confrontation," he said. "A renewed Church will face the modern world. It will say: look at us and you will see Christ; touch us and you will feel the charity of early Christianity; think with us and you will

learn Christ's truth; act with us and you will find us selfless men interested in the good of all that is human: . . . join us and you will find the source of God's grace and eternal life."

Mr. Work pointed out that this was the first Church council to make the lay apostolate a part of its formal agenda. "The results," he said, "will underscore the essential role of the layman in the Church; will stress his unique function in the Mystical Body; will emphasize his membership in the priesthood of the faithful, and especially clarify his apostolic missionary responsibility to the secular world as part of the total and singular apostolate of the Church."

RETREATS FOR SEPARATED BRETHREN . . .

It is inevitable that there should be a variety of attempts at popular or low-level Ecumenism, corresponding to and complimenting the efforts of the Council and high-level theological dialogue. One of the most successful of these has been retreats for Protestants and others at lay retreat houses. At least four such retreats are scheduled for the coming year. For the fourth successive year, the Dominican retreat house at Elkins Park, a suburb of Philadelphia, will devote a weekend to non-Catholic retreatants, both men and women. For women only are the retreats at the Dominican sisters in Schenectady and at the Cenacle at Lake Ronkonkoma, Long Island and Mt. Kisco, N.Y. Retreat masters will be supplied by the Paulist Fathers. For information or reservations write:

June 14-16, The Cenacle, Mount Kisco, N.Y.

June 28-30, Dominican Retreat House, Elkins Park, Pa.

July 26-28, Dominican Retreat House, Schenectady N. Y.

October 25-27 The Cenacle, Lake Ronkonkoma, Long Island.

UNITY OCTAVE . . .

In Columbus, Ohio, Catholics and Protestants were united in observing the Chair of Unity Octave. Identical services were held during the eight day period at St. Joseph Cathedral and in 13 Protestant churches in the city. The service was a Bible-Vigil consisting of readings from the Scripture, recitation of the Apostles' Creed, a litany for Christian unity, the Our Father, and a prayer for the day. A common prayer said during the Octave begged God's pardon for harsh judgments and exaggerations in religious controversy.

JOHN J. KEATING, C.S.P.

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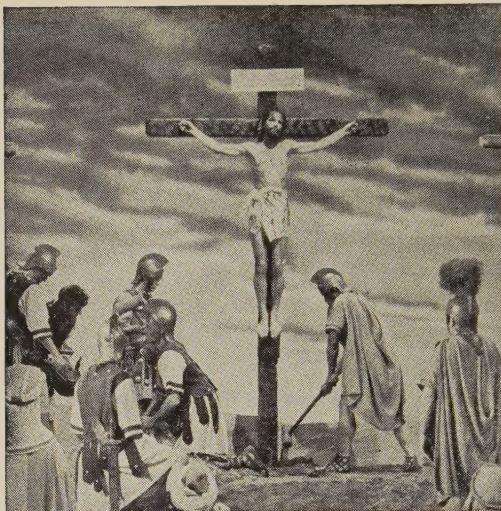
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* * *

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